THE ASHBY TOWN PUMP

VOL 1 MAY, 1945 NO 12

V - E DAY

V-E Day has finally arrived. It seems hard to realize that a day for which we had so long waited has come and gone and yet here in Ashby and Fitchburg it was almost another day. Our goal is now V Day when we feel there will be real cause for rejoicing and celebration.

There was a feeling of pride in the unconditional surrender of Germany -- pride in the job that you boys have done. There were prayers too, for those that sacrificed to make victory possible. There were moments of silence, that reflected the unknown sacrifices that lie ahead to make a total victory possible.

V-E Day came as an anti-climax after two or three false alarms and the gradual let-up of fighting during the preceeding two weeks. Work went on as usual with the stores remaining open and the plants continuing their production. Our efforts and thoughts have turned to the West and the defeat of Japan, a job that we know will be hard and lengthy.

We hope that those who have done the fighting in Europe will have a chance to come home and enjoy a well earned furlough before continuing to the Pacific. We know that this will not be possible in all cases - we hope you will be among the lucky ones. For those who have already seen service in the Pacific, we hope that speedy reinforcements will put into effect the much publicized rotation plan and make it more than just a dream or a joke.

Here at home we pledge ourselves to continue to produce the food, the goods and materials and perform the accompanying services that will insure a more than ample supply. You can be assured that your home plans to give more than may be needed to bring about a final victory and your speedy and permanent return.

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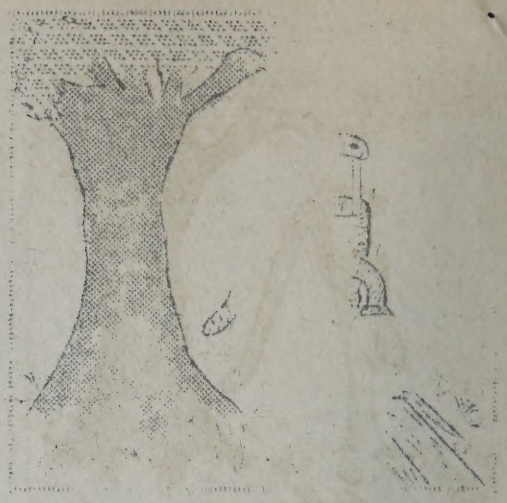

Letters From The Boys

Richard Wilkinson writes from Italy," One afternoon I took a tour out to a place called Solfatara, which is the crater of an extinct volcano. In one place , there is a spot where black soupy mud boils up continuously. It's said to be 400° hot and has a strong sulphurous odor. In several other places, very hot gases are escaping through cracks in the ground and over one such place is built a natural turkish bath which is about 130° inside. The whole area is quite flat and is surrounded by the edges of the old volcanos. During the rainy season, the lower portion fills up forming a shallow lake.

On another occasion, I had a very interesting but strenuous excursion when I climbed Mt. Vesuvius. After riding out on an electric train, I changed cars to the one which starts up the mountain. It rises on an 8° incline to a point where the lava flow of March 1944 covers the tracks to a depth over the telephone poles for about 100 ft.

After walking over this, I boarded the cog railway which took me to the halfway house. This was a 25° incline which is rather steep. The car continued on the now gradual slope until it reached the place where the lava covered it completely. The rest of the way was by foot and believe me, it was some climb !!! It took over an hour, but it was worth it.

The "funicula" which used to go up the cone was completely destroyed by the eruption. It was a 55° rise, so you can get a little idea what a struggle it was climbing up the loose volcanic ash. We had a guide to show us the way, and I guess it would have been difficult without him. On reaching the edge of the crater, I was amazed by the immensity of it. It's cylindrical in shape and roughly 250' across and 390'deep. It was still smouldering in a few spots, and the sulphur smell was quite strong. The guide said the path around the top was about 2 miles long. The summit offered a wonderful view of Naples and the whole bay and surrounding countryside. I was above the clouds and the Isle of Capri appeared to be floating in space, for below was the ruins of old Pompei which was buried by volcanic ash in 79 A.D. and the new city nearby. Also, I could see the black trail of the lava flow which destroyed two villages at the foot of the mountain in March 1944

Descending was not so difficult and coming down the cone was almost like skiing through the loose volcanic ash which is greyish in color. The lava is black and looks like burnt slag from a big furnace. After a refreshing drink of native orangeade, a poor substitute for the real thing - and costs about 25¢ a small glass, I made a quick descent by rail. I got off at the " autostrada " and hitch-hiked back to town. It was truly an interesting and never to be forgotten experience."

From Henry Kulo -- " I was stationed in Southern England for a few weeks and I really enjoyed it. I spent most of the time in Winchester, the Cathedral City of England. Winchester, formerly the capitol of England, is full of history and I took some very interesting tours. The cathedral there is the second largest in Europe and is 850 years old, but very well preserved. It is full of beautiful architecture and tombs.There are very small stone passageways all through the Cathedral, and all of us came out with at least one bump on the head. Of course there were other attractions there, including numerous dances every night -- and I was really surprised at how well the English girls danced.

At present I am with the Signal Corp in France. I am a Section Chief of a Radio Repair Section and I like my work very much."

Fred L. Taylor C.M. 2/C is now stationed in the Philippines where the Seabees are making roads and erecting buildings on one of the islands. He writes us that the climate is much the same as New Guinea where he was previously stationed. The temperature is just as high and it is hot and muddy. Any thermometer when put in the sun soars toward the top mark, never quite registering the actual temperature as the thermometer has to be set in the shade to cool off before combustion takes place.

"Here we have to protect ourselves from mosquito bites; we must wear our shirts after 6 P.M. no matter how hot it is and apply mosquito lotion which is issued to us. It is the best repellant I have seen for keeping them away. We have mosquito bombs, charged cylinders, which emit a fine mist. These are turned on at night and last about a month when used every night. They also are very effective in keeping bugs away from the lights.

Easter Sunday we attended services in the Cathedral. The services were conducted by a native who spoke in broken English.The altar is made of solid silver and the natives kneel on the tile floor and stay there during the service.However,there are a few benches made of mahogany.The native women were all dressed up in their finery.During the service, swallows,that look like our barn swallows,flew in and out to their nests which were in the columns and stone walls."

Rauni Honkala who is at Camp Gordon,Georgia, sent us a nice letter telling us how he feels about the possibility of a new Town Hall."Regarding the new Town Hall,I don't believe there could be a better plan. The young folks of Ashby deserve a new hall and I'm sure the townspeople could not turn down a plan which would help them in every way. It will be we, the taxpayers of the near future, who will help pay for it and I am willing in every sense of the word.

Thanks for the Town Pump and please keep it coming."

Raymond Wright has sent us another appreciative letter of thanks and mentions a surprise visit from Rich Wilkinson. "He had secured a five day leave from his ship and was at the local rest camp, so he looked me up and we had a nice visit.I guess he expects to be making another trip back home soon and I sure wish I could go with him, but I guess we'll have to finish the job first.

You said you wished the servicemen would write and express their views about the Auditorium the town is hoping to build. All I can say is I think they did the right thing by appointing the committee and hope it will be possible to build it. We sure need it."

Pfc. Ivers Brooks,formerly of Ashby is now with General Hodges Ninth division in the European Theater. He has been in the Army two years and overseas since last June.He wrote home telling of some of his interesting experiences of living in Germany. He writes that one night he had to go out and find eggs for his supper,and that he had a few pieces of bacon that he had saved a few days.Once a month the boys get clean clothes, a shave, and a bath, and a real bed to sleep in. He has a German helmet and a pistol that he obtained from a German soldier.His brother,Pvt. Lee Brooks is in Germany with General Patton's army.

We have recently seen a letter from Johnny Johnson stating that he misses the few comforts and conveniences to which he had been accustomed in the Hawaiian Islands. He is now stationed in the Palau Group where he finds that life is a bit on the rugged side.He misses the cold drinks, hot showers,electric lights and mail seems long in arriving. The weather seems to

go from one extreme to the other, as it either rains continuously or gets hot as blazes. He says the one life saver is their closeness to a beach from which they get a nice breeze. He has been doing some camping out and finds that his own cooking is not so hot.

While Mark Thatcher was stationed in France awaiting assignment to a regular unit, he and a Fitchburg Fellow, Phil Marriot, had a wonderful time visiting in a French home. They went there to get Phil's watch fixed and the Frenchman asked if they played checkers."Phil said that I did and I said he did, so what did he do but go and get the checkers. He brought the ordinary kind and the French kind. The French checkerboard is 10 squares by 10 squares where ours is 8 by 8. They use 20 checkers instead of 12.... I played two games of French checkers with him while Phil played with the wife. Then we switched. We had a swell time. Phil and I would kibitz each other and she would tell her husband what we said and they would laugh like hock and so would we. He speaks a little English, when he made a good move or Phil or I made a bad one, he would point it out and say,"No good for you--good for me," and we'd all laugh"

The Frenchman was a painter snd had many really beautiful oil, charcoal and pastel drawings which he showed them. The wife is a school teacher and the school room is part of the house.

"When we got there they were just starting to eat supper.It gave me kind of a funny feeling . The entire meal consisted of potatoes, bread and water."

"Wasn't that an interesting experience ? I wish we could visit them again but probably we'll never see them again."

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GRANGE NEWS

Ashby Grange is getting back to normal routine again after our Degree Meeting with Harvest Supper and Inspection with our class of nine candidates. There were over 125 persons attending the supper and over 100 members and visitors at the meeting. The third degree was exemplified by a ladies degree team with Helen Bailey as master, with floor and drill work, with one half the team dressed in slacks and straw hats, and the other half in gingham dresses and sunbonnets, all carrying sickles, symbolizing harvesters and gleaners returning from their labors in the fields. The fourth degree was worked by the regular officers with Hortense Ekola as master. Our inspecting deputy was Mr. John Blackmere of East Orange,Mass. One of our visitors for the evening was our own Frances Evans of the Waves home on furlough. Everyone was glad to see her and she looked as though she was well treated in the Waves. We are loosing another member to the armed services. Wally Hill will be unable to graduate with his high-school class as he is to report on May 10th. Good luck, Wally, and a safe return.

Several members of the Grange are rehearsing and preparing for the play to be put on when we entertain the Pomona Grange. All the granges in our Pomona are competing for a prize given at the end of the current year. So here's hoping that Ashby comes through with the first prize. The Ashby High Girls Glee Club under the direction of Mrs. H. White will entertain with a half hour program of songs on the same evening. We will also have a State Speaker, Mrs. Dorothy Warden, State Lady Assistant Steward. The Home and Com. Service Committee are preparing a box of scrap books, puzzles, stuffed animals and toys for the pleasure and entertainment of the patients at the Burbank Hospital. We are also collecting a box for the Russian War Relief of food articles. At the last meeting the

committee sponsored movies for the evening's program. Our next meeting is neighbor's night when we expect to have a goodly crowd as everyone likes to come to Ashby as they always have a good time.

The Gay Nineties

Rehearsals are underway for a big show, "The Gay Nineties", to be put on in the First Parish Hall on May 19th by the P.T.A. This will be quite an event; a musical entertainment of old familiar songs interspersed with specialty numbers. We would like to write up the complete program for you but we have been asked to reserve this until after the performance.

One of the feature numbers will be an old timers' dance by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lyman, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Piper, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Foresman, Mrs. Clara Durkee and Mr. John Joyce. Mr. Joyce will be the caller and Will Ayer from Fitchburg, the fiddler. A barbershop quartet will sing several old songs.

We feel that Ashby did her share in the recent drive to collect clothing for United Nations relief. With the help of the Jercy Club, the town collected over half a ton of used clothing.

Dorothy Elliot recently underwent an appendectomy at the Burbank Hospital. She is now recovering at home.

Our star typist, Polly Hopkins, is now in California with her husband, Ens. Chester Hopkins, who is on leave there.

Charles Caton, of West Upton, formerly of Ashby, was inducted into the Army recently and reported for duty April 13.

We have a report that Mrs. Kenneth Mackey has a new baby -- a fine, frisky, bottle-fed lamb.

BIRTHS

A son, Lyle Vincent, to RT 2/C and Mrs. Leon Evans--in Florida.

A daughter, Janet Irene, to Mr. and Mrs. John W. Howe, (Lucilla Hayes) on April 30th, at Nashua.

ENGAGEMENTS

Mrs. Myrtle E. Williams of Cleveland, Ohio announced the engagement of her daughter, Evelyn, to A.M.M. 1/C Leonard A. Hayes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Luther H. Hayes of Main Street.

Miss Williams is a graduate of Leominster, Mass. High School, class of 1941, and is now employed in Cleveland.

Mr. Hayes graduated from Ashby High School, class of 1940, and later attended Worcester Trade School and is now stationed at the naval air station at Atlanta, Ga.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur L. Wass of South Road, Ashby, announce the engagement of their daughter, Shirley, Ph.M 3/C U.S.N.R. to John P. Brewer Jr. E.M. 1/C U.S.N.R., son of Mr. and Mrs. John P. Brewer Sr. of Worcester. Both are graduates of Ashby High School. Miss Wass enlisted in the Waves in April 1944 and is now stationed at the Chelsea Naval Hospital.

During the past two and a half years, Mr. Brewer has seen overseas service and is now attending an Electrician's school in Washington, D.C.

MARRIAGES

Miss Pauline M. O'Connor, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. O'Connor of 42 Summer St. and Ralph A. Curran, son of Mr. and Mrs. James A. Curran of Ashby were married on April 21, 1945 in St. Bernard's Church, Fitchburg.

On April 24, 1945, Ensign Edmond L. Langille U.S.N. of Greenville, N.C. and Gwendolyn Helen Rajala of Ashby were married at the home of the bride on Fitchburg State Road. The Rev. Andrew Groop was the officiating clergyman.

The Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop will start its second season on Friday, May 11. A "Good Riddance" Sale was held in April to make room for a new lot of goods --and incidentally -- about $ 60 more in the treasury. A gift of 64 hats all shapes, colors and sizes-- all from one person should interest most of the Ashby women.

A public auction was recently held at the home of Mrs. Louise E. Caton, on Main St. Mrs. Caton, widow of Patrick Caton, lives in West Upton now.

Albert Haywood recently sold his house on New Ipswich Road to Miss Helen Johnson of Weston. It is interesting to note that this farm was originally a land grant from the estate to the Wilder family, later sold to the Boyntons, and for the past 51 years, has been in the Haywood family. Mr. Haywood is now residing in Topsfield.

Harry Loveland is now at home after being confined to the Groton Hospital for observation.

Mrs. Barbara (Bennett) Jackson has received word from the War Department that her husband, Sgt. Harold V. Jackson, who was killed in Germany, has been awarded the Purple Heart.

Have you heard about the June Bug who flew against the wind - shield ? He picked himself up and said, "That was fun, but I wouldn't have the guts to try it again."

ALLEN FIELD READY IN 1946

Allen field has been plowed up and good crops of barley, buck - wheat and clover have been raised the past 3 years. But Asa Allen announces that the field is to be rolled down and seeded this summer so that next summer when the boys are home again the field will be in excellent shape. Ashby fans are counting the days when the town will again have a real ball club.

George Elliott is an extremely busy man these days. In addition to his duties as janitor at Lyman School and member of the board of selectmen, he has recently been appointed fire chief and forest fire warden. What does George do with his spare time?

Crop Loss

In past issues, we have raved and condemned our New England weather, but until the last month, there was no heavy damage. However, the last frost after a very unreasonable and early Spring, has brought almost complete crop loss to our larger orchards. Reports ranging up to 95 % loss are being circulated with Dick Saari and Charles Stone having the biggest loss. Besides the big apple crop failure, it is feared that most of the strawberries have been lost, so that the outlook for the annual crops is very discouraging.

School News

The basketball team got off on the wrong foot by losing their first game to Townsend 29-1. Though limited in the choice of players for their team, the Ashby boys hope to give a better account of themselves when they have a chance to do a little practicing. Wally Hill was the starting pitcher and Bill Tiilikkala was the only Ashbyite to get two hits.

The boys lined up as follows:

George Johnson	1 b.
Bob Brand	2 b.
John Rajala	s.s.
Eddie Lord	3 b.
Wally Hill	p.
Bob Gummerus	c.
Bill Underhill	l.f.
Bill Tiilikkala	c.f.
Paul Foresman	r.f.
Richard Shattuck	
Harold Brand	

The Senior Class and one member of the Junior Class accompanied by Principal Waino I. Pernaa, spent a week sightseeing in New York City during Spring Vacation. The trip

itinerary included the Statue of Liberty, Chinatown, lower Manhattan, Radio City, Music Hall, Empire State Building, LaGuardia airfield, theaters, baseball games and shopping trips. The group returned to Ashby on April 20th. The Party included Evelyn Simonds, Irma Haapala, Harold Brand, Jr., Walfred Hill, Albert Schlemmer, and Donald Rackliffe, all seniors and Paul Bernhardt, a Junior.

The girl's glee club of the High School is presenting a 15 minute musical program over Radio Station WEIM. This is the girls third appearance over the air waves.

The schedule calls for Baccalaureate Sunday on June 10, graduation on Friday, June 15, and the close of school on June 20.

The gift of a cute little gray mouse was not appreciated by Mrs. Guyer; that is, if the screams which filled the school are any indication. Billy Tiilikkala and Bob Gummerus are reported to still give the teacher a wide berth.

BASKETBALL AWARDS

The P.T.A. dinner in honor of the girls and boys high school basketball teams and the meeting that followed were a grand success. The dinner itself was a grand treat after which Eddie Forss as toastmaster, introduced the speakers of the evening, Mr. Asa Allen as the principal speaker and Mr. Luther Hayes who spoke for the school committee. Both speakers remarked on the fine qualities of sportsmanship shown during the past season.

During the regular meeting that followed, Lt. Oliver Allen, U.S. Navy gave a most interesting talk about the tremendous job that has been done in convoying ships across the Atlantic, the task of assembling the D-Day invasion fleet and the hardships endured in Antwerp. The job of assembling 8000 ships for D-Day and making ports for these ships to unload in Normandy took almost super human effort and planning. Lt. Allen told what an important part the port of Antwerp played in receiving the supplies that led to the final and victorious onslaught on Germany.

Following the talk, Mr. Pernaa presented the letters and awards to the two teams. He praised them for their playing during the year, and held high hopes for the next year's boys team which will be made of mostly six-footers.

Basketball:

Girls: Laura Suokko, Phylis Aho, Eileen Shattuck, Joan Griffin, Pauline Goguen, Betty Walker, Louis Bernhardt, Evelyn Simonds, Barbara Bailey, Dorothy Sallinen, and Raili Honkala.

Boys: Paul Foresman, Walfred Hill, Eddie Lord, Robert Brand, Harold Brand, Bill Tillikkala, Bill Underhill, George Johnson, Paul Bernhardt, Victor Suokko and Richard Shattuck.

Happy Birthday to You

John Johnson	June 10
Raymond Heywood	June 22
John Flinkstrom	June 25
Everett Rackliffe	June 27
Stanley Johnson	June 28

To augment our picture on the hectic weather we have been having, it was an odd sight to see Arthur Wass mowing lawns on the 10th of May in the midst of a real snow storm that eventually gave us more than an inch of covering.

SERVICEMEN'S NEWS

Cpl. Merrick Pillsbury, who is stationed at Camp Sibley, Miss., is spending a furlough with his mother.

Pfc. Leslie Kincaid has been transferred from the India-Burma war zone to the China front. "Les", who will be remembered as one of the organizers of the Ashby civilian defense patrol, was stationed in India for several months.

Mrs. George W. Holmes, South Village was happily surprised recent-

ly when she received a letter from her son Pfc. Ernest Holmes.

Young Holmes was reported missing in action last January and Mrs. Holes has had no other word from him since, although he wrote he had sent her two cards.

He is now receiving a thorough check-up in an English hospital and hopes to be home before long.

Paavo Haapala has recently been transferred from the Air Force ground crew to the Medical Corp. Paavo is stationed somewhere in England.

Everett Rackliffe certainly moves around fast. He writes home that from Sept. 1st to Dec. 1st he has been in 5 different camps. He has a new job in the office at Camp Maxey and it keeps him pretty busy. A tornado struck about 30 miles from the camp and although it lasted only 15 to 20 minutes, 150 people were killed and hundreds were hurt. Men were sent over from the Camp to help in the emergency and about 300 who were badly hurt were brought back to the camp hospital.

Three of our local boys are at home on precious furloughs at the present time. Warren Cutting is on furlough from Virginia, Everett Rackliffe is home from Texas, and Richard Wilkinson, whose hospital ship has recently returned to the States, is on a 17-day leave. Oscar Forss is enjoying a thirty day leave in Fitchburg after serving three years in Italy. He told how much he appreciated the Town Pump while he was overseas. Oscar is formerly from Ashby.

Ashby was certainly glad to hear that Allan Kangas has been liberated from a German prison camp by the advancing Allied Armies. He is now in England and hopes to be home very soon.

Pvt. Waino Sakkinen of the United States Marine Corps was recently inducted into the service. He is stationed at Parris Island, South Carolina, His wife, the former Viola Joki, and daughter, Joan, live at 110 Marshall St., Fitchburg, Mass.

S 1/C Frances Evans, Wave, spent a leave with her parents Mr. and Mrs. William Evans, of Ashby, recently. She reported back to Quonset Point, R.I. at the termination of her leave.

Lt. Marjorie Bennett ANC, who is stationed at Mason General Hospital, Long Island, N.Y. recently spent a short leave with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank D. Bennett, of Main St. Ashby.

The Ashby boys at Camp Gordon, Georgia, ought to have quite a reunion. Rauni Honkala has been there some time; then last week Irving Davis, Henry Johnson and Leo Arsenault joined him there.

Aaron Brandt of South Village has enlisted in the Merchant Marine and is receiving his basic training at Sheepshead Bay, Long Island.

We have just heard that Blair Arsenault is back in the States and now at home for a well deserved furlough after his two crack-ups. He has 60 days to be with his wife and family. While he was missing, he was taken prisoner for about 10 days and marched 150 miles on a bum leg with just bread for sustenance. The American lines were close behind them though, and they talked the guards into letting them go-- filling them with tales of what the Americans do to Germans that are caught with American prisoners. While on the way to the prison camp they were strafed by American P-47s. He lost 12 pounds in 10 days, but has now gained it all back.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Pete: "I'm going to get a divorce. My wife hasn't spoken to me in six months."

Al: "Better think it over. Wives like that are hard to find."

SILLY

Pete: "I'm

GOLDEN